

significant tools and resources to conduct this investigation, including the power to hold hearings, demand documents, interview witnesses, and enter evidence into the record.

At the same time as our committee pursues its inquiry, there are a series of official investigations underway by the Department of Labor and the State of Utah. The investigations by the Mine Safety and Health Administration are of a law enforcement nature—if it is determined that criminal conduct occurred, they can at any time make a referral to the Department of Justice.

Although our committee investigation is still in its early stages, it has already been fruitful. In addition to the single hearing that has been held, we have requested—and the Department of Labor has produced—hundreds of thousands of pages of documents. We have conducted interviews with witnesses, and visited the site of the accident.

Despite the progress that has been made with our significant existing oversight capabilities, the majority today is seeking to confer on our committee the extraordinary power to subpoena witnesses for closed-door, staff-led depositions. This is an authority granted only in the rarest of circumstances, such as the protection of national security, the impeachment of a President, or the alleged defrauding of a national organization by its leadership.

I have serious reservations about establishment of deposition authority at this early stage of our investigation. The majority has not established any clear need for this authority. In fact, we are not aware of a single witness who has refused to cooperate with the committee after an official invitation. Moreover, while the majority has been unwilling to disclose exactly whose testimony this authority is intended to compel, they have indicated that just a handful of individuals are expected to require a subpoena. Members on our side of the aisle are more than willing to cooperate with regular committee procedures including hearings for this purpose, and as such, it remains unclear to me why this authority is necessary.

In addition to being premature and unnecessary, I believe this authority carries with it the possibility of grave unintended consequences. Deposition authority will allow dozens of interviews to be conducted under oath and compelled by subpoena. This could create the possibility of conflicts of interest, privilege claims and rulings, requests for immunity, leaks, and contradictory evidence.

Previous congressional probes should serve as a cautionary tale as we head down this path. Tactics used in the congressional investigation of the Iran-Contra affair caused key testimony against Oliver North to be thrown out, and his convictions to be overturned.

The Acting Solicitor of Labor voiced concerns that this investigation could similarly imperil any civil or criminal enforcement that may be necessary in this matter. In September, he wrote to Chairman MILLER and me, along with the leadership of the House, saying that the Committee's "parallel investigation . . . may compromise the integrity of MSHA's law enforcement investigation and potentially jeopardize its ability to enforce the law and hold violators accountable."

Up to this point, the majority has heeded our warnings and those of the Department of Labor. Our hearing and the series of interviews that have been conducted were structured in such a way as to avoid endangering

the investigations. I'm concerned that by granting this extraordinary deposition authority, the House is backing away from that cautious approach and rekindling the threat that our activities could undermine the aggressive enforcement that MSHA and other investigators have an obligation to pursue.

The deposition authority proposed today is crafted narrowly to cover only the Crandall Canyon mine collapse, and the rules adopted in our committee to govern these depositions were developed fairly to ensure the full participation of the minority. I believe these steps are acknowledgements by the majority that deposition authority is truly an extraordinary step, and must be undertaken with great care. I appreciate their cooperation on these points.

As I have made clear, there are serious questions about the timing and necessity of this narrowly crafted authority. Beyond that, however, I want to be perfectly clear that the specific authority being granted in this instance should in no way be viewed as precedent for future oversight functions of our committee or any committee of this House. Committee rules allow for a range of tools and resources that can be used to conduct rigorous oversight. Any effort to grant broader deposition authority will surely bring greater danger, and therefore greater objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I ask UNANIMOUS consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to include extraneous materials into the RECORD on H. Res. 836.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### SUPPORT THE VETERANS TIMELY ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE ACT

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this year I introduced H.R. 92, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act. H.R. 92 makes a responsible and reasonable commitment to veterans throughout this country. Under the bill, if a veteran cannot get an appointment with a primary care physician within 30 days, that veteran may see a private physician at no additional cost. Unfortunately, the Veterans' Affairs Committee refuses to move my bill and allow the House of Representatives to vote on it.

This year, I have witnessed the majority leadership use veterans as a political pawn. They've held the Military Construction and Veterans appropriations bill hostage. I won't allow the same thing to happen with veterans access to health care.

I ask my colleagues, regardless of their party affiliation, to stand up and protect veterans as they once stood up to protect you. And I ask the leadership to move H.R. 92.

HOLD THIS ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR TRYING TO LEAD US INTO WAR AGAINST IRAN

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Let's hope that the National Intelligence Estimate will stop the drumbeat of war against Iran. This administration knew full well that Iran did not have a nuclear weapons program in the same way that they knew that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction.

Now that Congress knows that the administration misled the Congress and brought Congress into voting time after time after time to isolate Iran, it's time for diplomatic relations, but it's also time for Congress to hold this administration accountable for trying to lead us into a war against Iran. It's time, once again, to start talking about the impeachment of the President and to act upon the impeachment of the Vice President for attempting to mislead us into a war against Iran.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in Saudi Arabia, seven men abducted a 19-year-old woman and her male companion. The seven men then raped the woman. And how does Saudi Arabia treat this rape victim? By ordering lashes and imprisonment for her because they blamed her for being alone with this male companion because he wasn't her spouse.

A Saudi Arabian court originally, listen to this, sentenced her to 90 lashes because she was alone with this individual. As if further victimization wasn't enough, the court just increased the victim's sentence to 200 lashes and 6 months in prison.

The Saudi Arabian Government now seeks to quell international outrage over this sentence by saying the woman was married at the time of the rape but she was with a nonrelative male companion who wasn't her spouse.

No explanation or excuse can justify this punishment for the victim. This woman was victimized by her own nation.

The Saudi Arabian court also removed the lawyer from the case and revoked his license because he spoke to the media. The lawyer now faces permanent disbarment. So much for freedom of speech.

Human rights seem to be absent in Saudi Arabia, because rape victims should not be sent to jail, and even lawyers should have the right of freedom of speech.

And that's just the way it is.